

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 1, 2006

The Honorable Michael Chertoff
Department of Homeland Security
Mail Stop 3000
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Chertoff:

It has come to our attention that the Fiscal Year 2006 Homeland Security Grant Program has significantly cut funding for the National Capital Region, threatening this region's capability to prepare for, respond to and recover from a terrorist attack or natural disaster. We are dismayed and frustrated that a region, which by all measurements is at the top of the list of potential terrorist targets, will experience such a dramatic reduction to our public safety resources.

As our nation's capital region, we bear a disproportionate burden in terms of homeland security costs and ensuring public safety needs. In addition to being one of the only two targets of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, our region has confronted multiple anthrax attacks on federal and congressional offices as well as the sniper shootings that imperiled the region. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has recognized the unique national threat to this region and created the Office of National Capital Region Coordination, the only such office in DHS to focus on a particular geographical area.

Knowing well that the National Capital Region (NCR) faces persistent security threats, we are astounded that the FY06 allocation for the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) represents a 40 percent cut from last year's level. With over \$190 million in documented needs, this \$46 million allocation falls dangerously short of what is necessary to make critical investments in our regional security. We understand that there are risks throughout the nation, but DHS' conclusion that the NCR can absorb such a cut and still provide adequate protection for millions of citizens and visitors is both shortsighted and unacceptable.

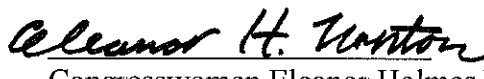
It was our understanding that the allocation formula established by DHS was intended to add transparency to the allocation process and provide additional resources for the most at risk regions. The decision rendered yesterday actually provided less funding for the most visible targets, including the NCR and New York City. We request that DHS be more forthcoming with the details of their decision making, including how the new allocation formula resulted in less funding for the highest at-risk areas, what discretionary decisions were made by leadership within DHS regarding funding levels for different regions, and what DHS intends to do to ensure that the public safety within NCR is not compromised by these cuts. We expect DHS to provide our offices with a briefing and share appropriate documentation to address these and other serious concerns we have about the allocation.

We are one of the few regions that routinely hold regular meetings to address security concerns and actively seek coordination with DHS. These cooperative efforts have helped overcome many of the daunting challenges we face. We ask for your immediate consideration and response to the issues raised in this letter. Until these questions are answered to our satisfaction and that there is compelling evidence to suggest that other localities are at as great a risk as our region, we demand that DHS reconsider its allocation of UASI grant funding.

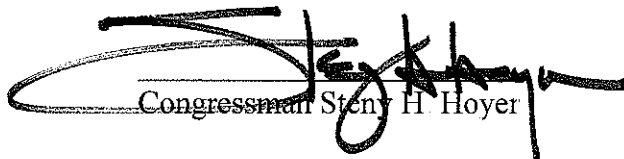
Sincerely,

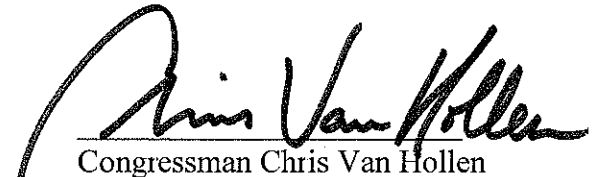

Congressman James P. Moran


Congressman Tom Davis

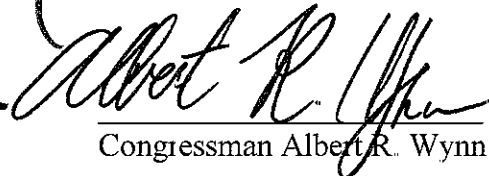

Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton


Congressman Frank R. Wolf


Congressman Steny H. Hoyer


Congressman Chris Van Hollen


Congressman C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger


Congressman Albert R. Wynn


Congressman Benjamin L. Cardin

Cc: The Honorable George W. Foresman, Under Secretary for Preparedness
Ms. Pamela Turner, DHS Congressional Liaison